

Be Brave, Dummy

by scribh

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Summary: Livianna is a Roman noblewoman who suddenly yearns for freedom. After stowing away on a boat that ends up in Berk, she realizes what she's been hiding inside herself the whole time. The real Livianna, who even she despised. But when her past comes to claim her, will she be able to make peace with the real her, or will she be the one that sent two powerful armies into war?

Be Brave, Dummy

**A/N: My first fanfic, yay! Finally, it's up. That took way too long
-_-**

This is a revised version, thanks to Bardess of Avon for bringing some things (like obvious language barriers I should've caught) to my attention...thanks a bunch!

Read on!

_It had been a beautiful summer day, but dark clouds lingered on the sides. I stood up in my room, wearing my wedding dress, and looking at myself in a small hand mirror. I looked different. My makeup was that of a woman, not a girl. My long, dark hair had been twisted into six thick strands, each secured by a red ribbon. And the reddish veil only made my hair look darker, more attractive. A crown of flowers, ones I had spent hours picking, made me feel like a princess from the old stories told to me as a child. I looked like I had always imagined, beautiful. But something felt off. _

_The feeling only increased as the morning went on. The wedding wasn't until late afternoon, so I was left in her room to practically drown in her anxiety. Her nursemaid and foster mother, when my own mother failed to deliver, entered the room and I felt the need to confide all this in her. She just laughed it off, claiming nerves as the cause. But I had been nervous before; this was something different all together. _

The wedding was a blur. It had been at my father's house, so it was quite a sight to see. Or it would've been to passersby, to see the young noblewoman and slightly older nobleman getting married. Obviously, it was quite a spectacle. Half the town was walking in the procession from my house to my new husband's, throwing small chestnuts, as was custom. When they arrived, my husband Blandus took me from my real mother's arms and lifted me over the threshold. Right before the door was shut, I saw the young boy who had been carrying the Hawthorne torch throw it up in the air. Its bright flame flickered, then died out almost completely as it disappeared into the group of scrambling attendees. Then the wooden door was all I could see. I felt slightly empty, and that sick feeling from earlier made a reappearance. But it melted away when an arm slid around her waist, untying the Hercules knot in her belt.

_ "We don't have to let them back in, you know." A deep voice said in my ear. I giggled and turned around, facing my new husband. _

_ "Yes we do." It was true. The guests would go away for a bit, but come back at sunset expecting a party. And a party they would get. It would be one for the ages. _

My eyes opened slowly, realizing that dream always ended right at the fun part. It was more memory than dream, though. And the proof was snoring right next to me. That party had been one for the ages, and I had the courage to think us newlyweds would have a long and happy marriage. That lasted for about a week. One day, Blandus is the loving husband and gentleman everyone thought he would be, the next he was no more than an angry drunk man with a woman to bend at his every will. For three years, that's who I was. I was just an object, someone to throw around and laugh at and slap every now and then. And I was silent. I swallowed my rebellious words, kept her grumbling inside my head. I got up from bed and got dressed, trying not to wake Blandus. The last time I did, well, the bruise on my hip still shone in all its black and blue glory. I made my way to the servant's quarters and started ordering them around.

The day went on as most of my days do, until I realized they were out of grain. I sprung on the chance to head to the market and left without looking back, not even a goodbye to Blandus. All this defiance was exciting. The market was right by the dock, so I stood and watched the ships pull into port as the slave that accompanied me went to purchase the grain. I saw a particularly impressive cargo boat pull in and gave a low whistle. It was the biggest thing I had ever seen in my life. But soon I heard the calls of 'Mistress Livianna' and had to leave. I glanced back once more at the men taking boxes twice my size out of the bottom of the boat.

It was way after sunset the next time I had a chance to go outside. I could still see the ships in the distance, the small torches that outlined the dock were only things keeping me sane at the moment. I had finished my housework and had brought Blandus's dinner to him, only to find that he had brought in another whore off the streets for the third time that week. I had just set his dinner down and ran out of the house. He wouldn't be coming after me; no, he'd be taking advantage of the poor girl. Then he would drink until he passed out on the floor and I would have to call some of the slaves from their quarters to carry him into bed and she'd have to deal with him getting up in the middle of the night complaining of a headache and

throwing up. I'd have to deal with it because that's what a good wife does, puts up with her husband, takes everything he throws at her and leaves herself open for more, lets him do whatever he wants. I looked back at the tiny lights by the docks, once more. The tears prickling in the back of my eyes had turned them to shining gold beacons.

And then I snapped.

I was panting from sheer anxiety. I had made it out of the house with a small bag of important possessions, and was now walking down the boardwalk, trying not to draw any attention to myself. A big, burly man had turned the corner when I wasn't paying attention and my heart almost stopped. But I recognized the smell of too much alcohol all too well and realized that he couldn't have seen me clearly if he had tried. Clutching the small linen bag in my hand, she pressed on.

Finally, I made it to the big ship that I had seen before. The boxes that had been moved out of there were twice my size, surely there would be room for me. I was going to escape. I sent another quick prayer to Libera, the female version of the god of freedom, before climbing up.

Now I stood there, on a giant boat, with nowhere to hide. I sighed, dreading the fact that I could almost taste my freedom, and it had been greedily taken away from me. Angry, I kicked the air in front of me, but my foot made contact with something metal. Hissing in pain, I bent down and saw that it was a handle, attached to a trapdoor. I almost cheered aloud. The trapdoor creaked loudly and I winced. I looked down excitedly, but my heart sank. It was too deep; there was no way I could jump like I had expected. And she couldn't climb down the ladder, what with my useless left hand and all. I cursed my mother under my breath for being so negligent to her unborn child. My mother hadn't been preparing for the birth of me, Livianna, her third child. She had been at her house alone when the contractions started, and was too stubborn to ask for any help. Although a nursemaid had found her, complications had already set in and the small bones in my hand had been shattered and could never be repaired. It left the mother with a just day of minor regret and left the child a life with a useless hand. Because of that, climbing had never really been my specialty, especially while holding something else that was too precious to drop.

A small pebble had somehow ended up on the boat, so I kicked it down the trapdoor. It was a few very long seconds before she heard a small thud.

Why would I do that? That just made it ten times worse. Sighing, I clamped my teeth down on the opening of the bag so I had at least one free hand.

It was a long, dangerous trip down. And the moonlight had stopped helping a third of the way. I was stumbling down a ladder that led to a cargo hold, in a ship that could be going nowhere as far as I knew, in the dark, trying not to kill myself. The things people do for their freedom.

It was darker down there than I had imagined, and I cursed myself for not bringing a torch. It was a good ten minutes before I found a flat surface that I could lie down on. And once I did, I was asleep in

seconds.

I awoke to a wooden ceiling, not the white tiled one I was used to. I sat up, quite terrified and not knowing what exactly to do, until the room started to sway back and forth. It all came rushing back to me. I had hid in the cargo room of a ship. I had done it. And now the ship was moving and I was out of there. I let out a small cheer before clamping my own hand over my big mouth. There were other people on this ship, and they would surely bring me back to Rome if they found me. I sat up, and I finally could observe my surroundings with the sunlight shining through some cracks in the ceiling. It was just a bunch of wooden boxes that were filled with food, something I realized once I was able to pry a smaller one open and found it to be filled with nuts. The same ones thrown on my wedding day. Oh godsâ€œ!

Although my prayers to Neptune for a swift and calm voyage came true for the ship, it didn't happen for me.

Freedom! Finally!

This is a terrible ideaâ€œ!

I can see the world! I wonder if I'll be off to Asia, or something exotic like that.

I wonder if the sailors would take me home if I asked.

I bet this showed the jerk back home. You mess with the bull, you get the horns!

I should throw myself off the boat. I deserve it. I'm a despicable human beingâ€œ!

On and on, my mind interchangeably fought and accepted the idea that I could do what she wanted, as long as it was quiet and stayed in the cargo hold. I snacked on nuts all day and drank out of a water barrel I found, lounging around on boxes. If I peaked up through the cracks in the ceiling, I could see that the sailors were dark skinned and I could hear them speaking a language I couldn't put a name to, but somewhat understood. My father thought it would be important that a noble woman understood the basics of the languages used by the peoples we traded with. I caught a word that my mind rendered as island, and then another one that always came after it: Berk. I guessed that was the name of the island the boat was going to. When I woke up feeling good, I liked to imagine Berk as an exotic place, full of new plants and strange animals. But bad days ended with nightmares of a savage land, populated by savage people.

They made it to Berk before the week was up. I hadn't realized the swaying of the boat had stopped, and when the trapdoor creaked open, I froze. It was definitely a man coming down the ladder, but every other step sounded more like wood hitting wood than a foot on a ladder rung. It was the same way when he stepped off the ladder and walked towards the small box of nuts, half of which had been eaten.

I heard the man mutter something to himself. And then I heard the crushing of a shell. I cursed myself for being so lazy and not cleaning up after myself. Of course, I would leave something behind

like that, because nothing ever ends up-

I heard a loud, heavily accented voice from behind me, speaking a language I didn't understand. I turned around and looked up. Right behind me was a large man, with a peg leg and a hook-hand. Ignoring the fact that the man looked more concerned than angry I, resorting to my only other option, shrieked as loud as I possibly could. The man just sighed and hooked his hook-hand through the back of my tunic, lifting me up and somehow carrying me up the ladder, off the boat, and onto land. If I hadn't feared for my life, I would've been disappointed that Berk wasn't as exotic as I had hoped. But right now, I was hanging by her tunic on a hook that was where a hand should be, screaming for my life. The man clapped a hand over my mouth, silencing me, and then yelled, "Stoick!"

All of a sudden, a big, red-haired man appeared over the ridge, followed by lots of other people. He talked with the man holding me. Suddenly, it got very quiet and the man holding me said one word.

"Blindpassasjer." I could only assume it meant stowaway. When it was said aloud, I realized what >had happened. I had just broken a very important law and was going to be sent back to my home where she was going to be punished. Killed, more likely. A public execution, my whole family would watch, ashamed of what I had done.<p>

"Please don't send me back." A voice begged. It took me a second to realize it was my own. "Please. You don't understand." But their faces told me that was just it, they couldn't understand me.

Stoick sighed. He pushed a young man around my age in front of him, ordering him to do something. The boy had a slightly darker version of Stoick's red hair, so I guessed he was his son.

Hook-hand unhooked me as the young man walked toward me. He said something in a reluctant tone, waving his hand. I nervously followed him up through the group of people, now thoroughly disappointed that I was going to die without seeing anything interesting. Five other people had separated from the group and were following us. I didn't want to glance back, but my stupid curiosity got the better of me and I sneaked a quick look. A boy with long blonde hair and a girl with long braids, twins by the look of it, shoving each other while they walked. Next to them was a big, nervous looking boy. Then there was a smaller, darker haired boy talking to a girl with a thick blonde braid, who looked like she'd rather be doing anything than being a part of the conversation.

If I hadn't been freaking out over where they were taking me and what was going to happen when we got there, I would've said they all looked like good people. But I was, so they looked a bit more like they all wanted to kill me.

End
file.